

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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R 260145Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3072

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY VALETTA

USMISSION USUN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2434

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS, CB, FJ, MT

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR:

RELATIONS WITH FIJI, MALTESE RECOGNITION OF GRUNK,
SITUATION IN CAMBODIA

1. SUMMARY: DURING A CONVERSATION WITH ME APRIL 24, GKR
AMBASSADOR CHHUT CHHEOUR REVIEWED HIS EFFORTS TO OPEN DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS BETWEEN CAMBODIA AND FIJI, MENTIONED A REPORT THAT
MALTA WILL SHORTLY RECOGNIZE SIHANOUK'S GRUNK, AND DISCUSSED
THE CURRENT SITUATION IN CAMBODIA. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT
THE DEPARTMENT AND/OR USUN REVIEW WITH FIJIAN AMBASSADOR
SIKIVOU HIS VIEWS ON ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN
CAMBODIA AND FIJI. END SUMMARY.

2. AT HIS REQUEST CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR CHHUT CHHOEUR CALLED ON
ME APRIL 24, TO DISCUSS CAMBODIAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH FIJI,
RELATIONS BETWEEN MALTA AND THE GRUNK, AND THE SITUATION
IN PHNOM PENH.

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3. ON CAMBODIAN RELATIONS WITH FIJI, CHHUT CHHEOUR SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED ISSUE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS OVER PAST SIX MONTHS WITH R. M. NAIR, FIJIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER IN CANBERRA. NAIR HAD SEEMED TO BE VERY ENCOURAGING ABOUT POSSIBILITY BUT EVIDENTLY NO DECISION WAS REACHED AFTER NEGATIVE REPORTS MADE TO SUVA BY FIJIAN AMBASSADOR TO U.S. (AND UN REPRESENTATIVE) SIKIVOU. ACCORDING TO CHHUT CHHOEUR, SIKIVOU REPORTEDLY SAID IT WOULD BE EASIER TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO RE CAMBODIAN REPRESENTATION IN THE UN IF FIJI DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE GKR. CHHUT CHHOEUR SAID THAT NAIR DOES NOT AGREE WITH THIS VIEW AND WILL SHORTLY LEAVE FOR SUVA FOR CONSULTATIONS, WHERE HE SAID HE WOULD RAISE MATTER FURTHER.

4. I COMMENTED THAT WE MIGHT EXPLORE THE SITUATION TO FIND OUT VIEWS OF AMBASSADOR SIKIVOU ON RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA, ADDING MY BELIEF THAT PRIME MINISTER RATU MARA IS PROBABLY WELL DISPOSED TO THE GKR. I NOTED WE HAD SOMEWHAT THE SAME PROBLEM WITH THE GOA ON CAMBODIAN ISSUES AS AMBASSADOR CHHUT CHHOEUR HAD ENOUCNTERED WITH FIJI. THE GOA FOR A FULL YEAR HAS HELD THE VIEW THAT THE GKR WAS ABOUT TO COLLAPSE. THE AUSTRALIANS DON'T WANT TO BE REMINDED THAT THEY HAVE BEEN WRONG. I SAID I WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH NAIR ALSO.

5. ON MALTA, CHHUT CHHOEUR SAID THAT HONORARY CAMBODIAN CONSUL GENERAL PODESTA, IN SYDNEY, HAD BEEN TOLD APRIL 17 BY MALTA HIGH COMMISSIONER FORACE THAT MALTA WOULD SOON RECOGNIZE GRUNK AND THAT HE, FORACE, WOULD BE AMBASSADOR. (FORACE IS ALREADY MALTESE AMBASSADOR TO NORTH KOREA, NORTH VIET-NAM, AND THE PRC, IN ADDITION TO BEING HIGH COMMISSIONER TO AUSTRALIA). PODESTA IS ORIGINALLY MALTESE, AND FORACE'S BOAST HE WOULD BE FIRST AMBASSADOR TO GRUNK RESIDENT IN CANBERRA WAS PART OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN MALTESE. CHHUT CHHOEUR SAID HE HAD ASKED PODESTA WHERE FORACE WOULD PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS AND TO WHOM, BUT PODESTA DID NOT KNOW. CHHUT CHHOEUR SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING WE DO TO DISCOURAGE MALTESE, PARTICULARLY AS

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RECOGNITION OF GRUNK COULD BE EXAMPLE OTHERS MIGHT FOLLOW.

6. I SAID I DIDN'T KNOW IF THERE WAS ANYTHING WE CAN DO. THE MALTESE GOVERNMENT HAD SEEMED TO BE MOVING INCREASINGLY CLOSE TO THE PRC. IF SIHANOUK PUSHES PEKING TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING TO THE GRUNK, FORACE, AS MALTESE AMBASSADOR WITH CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH THE PRC,

WOULD LIKELY BE AFFECTED. I NOTED THAT FORACE HAD HELPED THE PRC EMBASSY IN CANBERRA TO PURCHASE REAL ESTATE FOR ITS OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL NEEDS.

7. ON A SEPARATE ASPECT OF THE CAMBODIAN SITUATION, I NOTED THAT I HAD SEEN FOREIGN MINISTER WILLESEE APRIL 24. I HAD MENTIONED TO WILLESEE THAT GKR CREDENTIALS MIGHT BE OPEN TO A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND ORGANIZATIONS. WILLESEE CONFIRMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA CONTINUED TO BASE ITS RECOGNITION OF THE GKR ON FULFILLMENT OF TWO CONDITIONS: 1) THAT THE GKR CONTINUE TO CONTROL PHNOM PENH AND 2) THAT THE GKR CONTINUE TO BE IN THE UN. I HAD ALSO SAID TO WILLESEE THAT I ASSUMED THE GOA WOULD GIVE FULL SUPPORT TO THE GKR, NOT MERELY ABSTAINING. WILLESEE ALSO CONFIRMED THIS POINT. CHHUT CHHOEUR SAID THE GOA HAD INDICATED IT WOULD ABSTAIN ON PROCEDURAL RESOLUTIONS TO TAKE UP THE CAMBODIAN REPRESENTATION ISSUE BUT WOULD SUPPORT THE GKR WHEN SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTIONS CAME UP FOR A VOTE. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GOA COULD ALWAYS FALL BACK ON THE PROCEDURAL ASPECT.

8. I COMMENTED THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IS CONTINUALLY UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE LEFT. VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR THIEP HAD RECENTLY EXPRESSED CONCERN TO ME OVER AUSTRALIAN POLICY TOWARDS INDO-CHINA. HOWEVER, THERE SEEMS TO BE MORE PRESSURE FOR THE GOA TO GIVE GROUND ON ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRG AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES THAN ON CAMBODIAN RECOGNITION, ALTHOUGH THE ISSUES ARE GENERALLY RELATED. I REHEARSED THE FACTS I HAD MENTIONED TO WILLESEE APRIL 24, NOTING THAT THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND EAST ASIA GENERALLY SUPPORT THE

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GVN AND THE GKR. MOREOVER, I RECALLED I HAD NOTED TO WILLESEE THAT THIS WAS A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN TO THE U.S. I HAD MENTIONED THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD CONSIDER HOW AUSTRALIA WOULD WANT THE U.S. TO ACT IF A PNG DISSIDENT MOVEMENT WERE SEEKING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION. WILLESEE WAS RECEPTIVE TO THE FOREGOING, BUT HE IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE LEFT. HE IS A DECENT MAN AND A GOOD POLITICIAN.

9. CHHUT CHHOEUR REVIEWED A CONVERSATION HE HAD APRIL 8 WITH DON KINGSMILL, AUSTRALIAN CHARGE IN PHNOM PENH WHO IS NOW ON LEAVE IN AUSTRALIA (HE IS DUE BACK IN CAMBODIA ON MAY 8). KINGSMILL HAD COMMENTED THAT FANK DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY PUNCH, AND THIS FACT IS AT THE ROOT OF RECENT CAMBODIAN REVERSES. HE NOTED THAT THE

SITUATION NEAR KAMPOT IS DIFFICULT AND THAT OUDONG HAS BEEN LOST AND IS UNLIKELY TO BE REGAINED. CHHUT CHHOEUR SAID HE HAD REPLIED THAT KAMPONG CHAM AND PHNOM PENH HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN AND THAT OUDONG HAD BEEN CAPTURED TO IMPRESS THE GRUNK. KINGSMILL SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO IMPROVEMENT ON THE GKR SIDE AND THAT THE FAILURE OF THE GRUNK TO MAKE HEADWAY IS EXCLUSIVELY DUE TO ITS OWN SHORTCOMINGS, NOT GKR PERFORMANCE. CHHUT CHHOEUR SAID HE SUPPOSED THIS IS VIEW KINGSMILL HAS BEEN REFLECTING TO AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH PERHAPS EXPLAINS THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE HE HAS ENCOUNTERED.

10. I SAID THAT THERE HAS RECENTLY BEEN SOME EVIDENCE OF UNREST AND CONTROVERSY IN HANOI AND SIGNS OF CONCERN OVER NEGLECTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THIS IS NOT A NEW DEVELOPMENT, BUT THERE IS MORE EVIDENCE THAN WAS PREVIOUSLY AVAILABLE. WITH A DETERIORATING INFRASTRUCTURE IN NORTH VIET-NAM, PROBLEMS HAVE EMERGED. MOREOVER, THE NVA HASN'T MADE THE GAINS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM IT HOPED FOR. THIS IS BOUND TO HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE SITUATION. I CONCLUDED THAT WE MUST ALSO CONSIDER WHAT IS HAPPENING IN NORTH VIET-NAM, THE MAIN SOURCE OF SUPPLY AND INSPIRATION FOR THE INSURGENCY IN INDO-CHINA.
GREEN

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